



**STELLENBOSCH**  
STELLENBOSCH • PNIEL • FRANSCHHOEK

MUNICIPALITY • UMASIPALA • MUNISIPALITEIT

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# TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

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- Annexure 2: Application Form for the Felling of Trees
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## **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

The aim of the Tree Management Policy is to protect and maintain the trees located on municipal property through accepted sound tree management (arboricultural) practices and thus promoting a sustainable development approach. This approach is geared towards making WC024 the greenest municipality in South Africa through Urban Forestry practices which guides investors towards future sustainable development. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that a guideline exists to manage trees within the Stellenbosch Municipality by improving the aesthetics of all areas in the planting and maintenance of trees.

## **2. OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS**

2.1. To regulate and facilitate the planting, protection, blanking, maintenance and for long term management of all trees on municipal property.

2.1.1. Ensuring uniform arboricultural procedures and practices.

2.1.2. Encouraging greening of new development projects.

2.1.3. Reduction of the carbon footprint by the planting of trees.

2.1.4. Planting, blanking and maintenance of trees in compliance with arboriculture best-practice guidelines.

2.1.5. Ensuring integrated infrastructure planning with other directorates within Stellenbosch Municipality such as Infrastructure Services, to promote tree protection and greening.

2.1.6. Protection and maintenance of all historic trees in compliance with applicable legislation.

2.1.7. Promoting the preservation of trees on private property where possible.

2.1.8. Marketing Stellenbosch as the Oak City.

2.1.9. Ensuring that private landowners are informed of their obligation, or as per lease agreements or planning approvals, to clear the property of alien vegetation.

2.2. This policy does not only focus on the guidelines for the management of trees but also addresses the associated benefits that includes the following:

2.2.1. Environmental benefits:

2.2.1.1. Climate amelioration

2.2.1.2. Flood control

2.2.1.3. Erosion control

2.2.1.4. Air pollution control

2.2.1.5. Energy conservation

2.2.1.6. Noise pollution control

2.2.1.7. Land reclamation

2.2.1.8. Wildlife and bio-adversity

2.2.2. Material Benefits:

2.2.2.1. Food and Fruit

2.2.2.2. Medicine

2.2.3. Amenity Benefits

2.2.3.1. Recreation

2.2.3.2. Aesthetics

2.2.3.3. Education

2.2.3.4. Health and wellbeing

2.2.3.5. Cultural and religious rituals

2.2.4. Economic Benefits:

2.2.4.1. Tourism

2.2.4.2. Added Value to Property

2.2.4.3. Asset Building

### 3. ABBREVIATIONS

3.1. **“WCO24”** means Greater Stellenbosch Municipality.

3.2. **“FY”** means Financial Year.

3.3. **“SP”** means Service Providers

### 4. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy:

4.1. **“aftercare”** means the tree maintenance regime which is implemented once the tree has been planted;

4.2. **“arboriculture”** means the science and practice of cultivation, management, and study of trees, shrubs, vines, and other perennial woody plants which specifically studies how plants grow and respond to cultural practices and to their environment, including the practice of cultural techniques such as selection, planting, training, fertilization, pest and pathogen control, pruning, shaping, and removal.

4.3. **“Tree blanking”** means the replacement planting of trees in gaps where trees have been lost or died.

4.4. **“champion trees”** is a list of protected trees in South African that are of national conservation value;

4.5. **“Council”** means the Council of Stellenbosch Municipality;

4.6. **“directorate”** means the Directorate: Community and Protection Services;

- 4.7. **“director”** means the Director: Community and Protection Services;
- 4.8. **“department”** means the Department of Community Services;
- 4.9. **“indigenous species”** means any tree that is indigenous to South Africa.
- 4.10. **“municipality”** means the Stellenbosch Municipality or any other Committee or official of the Municipality acting in terms of a delegated authority.
- 4.11. **“planting”** means the placing of sapling trees or seeds in the ground or container in order for them to grow;
- 4.12. **“pruning”** means the horticultural and arboriculture practice involving the selective removal of parts of a plant, such as branches, buds, or roots;
- 4.13. **“Indigent Households”** is as determined by the Council’s Indigent Policy as approved by Council from time to time;
- 4.14. **“road reserves”** means the local municipal land set aside and or zoned for the development of roadways and related engineering services;
- 4.15. **“removal of street trees”** means removal of the above ground level portion of a tree including the grinding away of the roots up to 30 cm below ground level. The complete root system will not be removed but may be poisoned if necessary to prevent further re-growth of the tree;
- 4.16. **“root barrier”** means patented chemical and/or mechanical guides that redirects tree roots down and away from hardscapes, preventing costly root damage;
- 4.17. **“street trees”** means any tree which has been planted on Municipal property;
- 4.18. **“streetscapes”** means a view or scene as streets in a city;
- 4.19. **“tree management”** means the protection and maintenance of the existing tree asset base in the Town, as well as the planning, planting and maintenance of future trees;
- 4.20. **“treescape”** a landscape including many trees or groups of trees;
- 4.21. **“treetrunk”** refers to the stem of the tree.
- 4.22. **“way leave”** means an approved right of way given for working over or under another ground or property.

## 5. REGULATORY CONTEXT

The following legislation but not limited applies:

- 5.1. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 Chapter 2: Bill of Rights.

- 5.2. National Water Services Act, 1997 (Act 103 of 1997).
- 5.3. Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (Act 43 of 1983).
- 5.4. National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998).
- 5.5. National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 2004 (Act 10 of 2004).
- 5.6. The Forest Act, 1998 (Act 1984 of 1998).
- 5.7. National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999).
- 5.8. Land Use Planning Act 3 of 2014.

## **6. ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT**

The Director: Community and Protection Services is accountable for the administration and enforcement of this Policy. The Director has the mandate in accordance with his delegation in writing to assign powers of duty to a responsible official or authorised person to ensure execution of this Policy. This Policy enforces the processes and procedures that must be adhered to in order for effective management and maintenance of all trees.

## **7. TREE PLANTING**

- 7.1. The municipality will facilitate the planting of trees at the department's own discretion which is aligned to a tree planting programme. Furthermore tree planting requests will be provided on the principle whereby a Tree Planting Commitment Form will be completed by the applicant (Annexure 3). Depending on funds and the availability of suitable material, the Municipality annually undertakes the planting of trees, requested by residents, along sidewalks in residential areas and to tree allocation to new housing developments.
- 7.2. Residents requesting individual tree planting must complete a Commitment Form to will maintain the tree in its entirety (Annexure 3).
- 7.3. Tree donations and sponsorships will be accepted based on a written agreement. On request from schools, Community Greening Projects and conservancies, trees may be donated.
- 7.4. Members of the public occasionally plant trees on public land without authorisation. The municipality may on its own discretion remove trees and plants.

## **8. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR TREE PLANTING**

- 8.1. Trees will be planted along sidewalks specified as street trees in accordance with the Tree Planting Programme. For new trees, preference must be given to the planting of local indigenous trees dependant on local conditions.
- 8.2. Private planting is not permitted on municipal or leased land without prior approval with the relevant Director/Manager of the municipality.

- 8.3. Existing trees that were planted on municipal land that cause(d) damage to private property must be reported to the municipality.
- 8.4. Existing infrastructure will be taken into consideration when trees are planted by means of way-leaves. The way-leave will determine whether an area is conducive for tree planting.
- 8.5. Trees shall not be planted under the following circumstances:
  - 8.5.1. Where it may interfere with any underground services;
  - 8.5.2. Close to a driveway or road intersection where it is likely to impair sight lines of motorists, cyclist or pedestrians;
  - 8.5.3. Where it will obstruct sight lines to traffic signs, signals or direction signs;
  - 8.5.4. Where pedestrian paths will be obstructed in such a way to cause people to walk in the street, or which makes passage by wheelchairs or push carts impassable.
  - 8.5.5. Where they may encroach on service infrastructure such as gas, electricity and telecommunication lines, water and sanitation services, except where root barrier has been installed;
  - 8.5.6. Where way-leaves was not conducted, particularly if trees interfere with existing services, namely electricity, street lights, water, sewerage and Telkom lines;
  - 8.5.7. Within 5 metres of an intersection, an existing driveway, electricity lamp pole or under power lines /overhead lines.
  - 8.5.8. Where planting compromises the protection of municipality's supply mains which is stipulated in the Electricity Services By Laws Section 25:
    - 8.5.8.1. Construct, erect or lay, or permit the construction, erection or laying of any building, structure or other object, or plant trees or vegetation over or in such a position or in such a manner as to interfere with or endanger the supply mains.
    - 8.5.8.2. Excavate, open up or remove the ground above, next to, under or near any part of the supply mains.
    - 8.5.8.3. Damage, endanger, remove or destroy, or do any act likely to damage, endanger or destroy any part of the supply mains; or
    - 8.5.8.4. Make any unauthorised connection to any part of the supply mains or divert or cause to be diverted any electricity there from.



- 8.5.8.5. The owner or occupier must limit the height of trees or length of projecting branches in the proximity of overhead lines or provide a means of protection which in the opinion of the municipality will adequately prevent trees from interfering with the conductors should a tree or branch fall or be cut down.
- 8.5.8.6. Should the owner fail to observe this provision the municipality may, after prior written notification, or at any time in an emergency, order the owner to cut or prune the trees or other vegetation in such a manner as to comply with this provision.
- 8.5.8.7. The municipality may, subject to obtaining an order of court, demolish, alter or otherwise deal with any building, structure or other object constructed, erected or laid in contravention with the Electrical Services by-law.
- 8.5.8.8. The municipality may in the case of an emergency or disaster remove anything damaging, obstructing or endangering or likely to damage, obstruct, endanger or destroy any part of the electrical distribution system.

## **9. TREE SPECIES SELECTION**

Tree selection will depend on the terrain, topography, climatic and species indigenous to the area, and will be selected from the List of Recommended Street Trees for Stellenbosch Municipality (Annexure 1). Local conditions of Stellenbosch Municipality must be taken into account when selecting trees. When tree species is selected consideration should be given to the available planting space in an area and the size of a fully grown tree to prevent challenges associated with the growth characteristics of trees.

## **10. SELECTION CRITERIA**

- 10.1. Species selected should complement the existing treescape and the concept of the 'Oaks City' should be maintained wherever possible.
- 10.2. Trees with large root systems will not be planted within the 2m radius of a pathway which may potentially cause damage to infrastructure.
- 10.3. A minimum of 5m (between trees) will be used on road reserves.
- 10.4. It is prohibited to plant any invasive tree in terms of applicable legislation.
- 10.5. To prevent root damage to underground services, or hardened surfaces, root control systems will be introduced to redirect roots from these areas.
- 10.6. Existing trees identified by the municipality as dead, dangerous and diseased will be removed and or replanted.

## **11. REPORTING OF INCIDENTS**

All tree related incidents reported to the Municipality will be processed as follows:

- 11.1. All tree incidents will be logged into the tree incident register.
- 11.2. The municipality's response time to emergency tree related incidence will take place within 24 hours.
- 11.3. The execution of normal operations or complaints if required will take place within 14 working days after the inspections have been conducted.

## **12. TREE BLANKING**

Tree blanking is exercised when an individual tree is removed and replaced with a new suitably appropriate tree, so as to ensure the planned tree planting programme remains in place for uniformity purposes. In the case of Oak trees the blanking method will be to replace on a like-for-like basis to retain the treescape of the area.

- 12.1. Tree blanking may only be done under the following circumstances:
  - 12.1.1. Planned by the municipality.
  - 12.1.2. Tree(s) has died or is more than 75% dead.
  - 12.1.3. Trees damaged beyond recovery due to the impact of human activity both accidental and deliberate (vandalism).

## **13. PRUNING AND REMOVAL OF TREES**

The management approach of Stellenbosch Municipality is that all trees are valuable and therefore requests for the removal of trees must be carefully considered by the responsible Department. Pruning or tree removal on municipal property will only be done by authorised officials or service providers.

- 13.1. No person(s) may prune or remove a tree planted on municipal property without prior authority from the Environmental Management Section.
- 13.2. A tree may be removed if the tree or any part thereof may be removed if it presents a risk to life or property.
- 13.3. Requests for pruning and removal of trees must be directed to the municipality.
- 13.4. Pruning or removal of trees on private property is not the responsibility of the municipality, but guidance will be given when required.
- 13.5. A tree on a property line will only be considered for pruning and felling if 70% or more the main stem is deemed to be on municipal property.
- 13.6. Where a member of the public plants trees that are considered to be unsuitable for the area or which interfere with any municipal or other services, such trees will be removed by the municipality after notifying the member of

public. The municipality reserves the right to charge for the removal of such trees as per the Tree Evaluation System (Table 1).

13.7. Champion Trees has special protected status in terms of the National Forests Act of 1998. No such trees may be cut, disturbed or damaged without a license acquired from the relevant authority.

13.8. The pruning or removal of trees will not be considered in the following instances:

13.8.1. Interference with radio, television, internet and DSTV reception;

13.8.2. Less than 75% dead or dying;

13.8.3. Aesthetic purposes, i.e. when it is seen as an eyesore to the surrounding environment;

13.8.4. Shedding of leaves, fruits, flowers, seeds, or any other plant material;

13.8.5. Specified as the cause of allergies;

13.8.6. Causing excessive shade;

13.8.7. View obstruction (other than reducing visibility of traffic sign lines);

13.8.8. Obscuring private advertising boards (other than public signage);

13.8.9. Causing nuisance in respect of swimming pools;

13.8.10. Hampering the growth of other plants;

13.8.11. Attraction of insects or birds (including bats) because of its flowers and or fruit;

13.8.12. Where the owner wants to renovate his property trees will not be removed to aid the renovation process.

13.9. The following factors shall be considered before pruning or felling of trees:

13.9.1. Public,- staff, property and contractors safety;

13.9.2. Legal factors.

13.10. Generally trees are only pruned or felled for sound arboriculture reasons such as:

13.10.1. Trees causing damage to infrastructure;

13.10.2. Trees obstructing pedestrian and/or vehicular movement or impedes traffic sight lines.

## **14. Damage to Trees**

14.1. When damage to trees is observed, the municipality must decide whether to take action against the responsible party. This will usually be to claim damages, which may result in criminal charges being laid.

14.2. The Tree Evaluation System (Table 1) will be used as a guideline to ascertain the value of a tree. Seven factors are taken into account when calculating the aesthetic value of a tree, with each evaluation factor having four possible values. The assigned value of each factor is multiplied by the other and the accumulative product is multiplied by the inflation rate to provide an overall estimated monetary value of the tree, i.e. factor a x b x c x d x e x f x g = total x inflation rate = R total. This formula is based on the British Tree Council formula, which is accepted worldwide by authorities.

**Table 1: Tree Evaluation System**

Factors		Evaluation Factor Score			
		1	2	3	4
i	Size of tree - girth, height, width and trunk size	Small 0-4 metres	Medium 4-8 metres	Large 8-16 metres	Very large 16 metres+
ii	Useful life expectancy	10-20 yrs	20-40 yrs	40-100 yrs	100 yrs+
iii	Importance of position in landscape (location and function, cultural and historical value)	Little	Some	Considerable	Great
iv	Presence of other trees, surrounds and aesthetics	Many 10 or more	Some 4-10	Few 1-4	None
v	Relation to the setting, location, foliage, cover and aesthetics	Barely Suitable	Fairly suitable	Very suitable	Especially suitable
vi	Form, shape, size, height, weight and look of tree	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
vii	Special factors - botanical value of species, growth rate, flowers, indigenous or exotic, evergreen or deciduous	None	One	Two	Three or more

14.3. The objective of the Tree Evaluation System is:

14.3.1. To provide an objective way of examining a tree by means of fixed criteria to assess a trees value in its environmental context. Such a method has wide application and affects management considerations, e.g. removal and planting.

- 14.3.2. To provide arboriculture and other practitioners with a system for assessing a value when trees are accidentally mutilated or destroyed or when removal is requested.
- 14.3.3. To provide planners and developers with a means of including trees in their estimates with the same precision, objectivity and consistency that they apply to other aspects of landscape and engineering works.
- 14.4. No tree located on municipal land is to be removed unless it presents a threat to human life or property, or if the tree has died. Exceptions to the rule:
  - 14.4.1. Trees classified as “declared weeds” in terms of the Conservation of Agriculture Resources Act, 1983 (Act 43 of 1983) and the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act 10 of 2004);
  - 14.4.2. Trees that are beyond recovery;
  - 14.4.3. Trees causing a traffic, electrical or health hazard;
  - 14.4.4. Trees that interfere with essential services where no other suitable alternatives can be found;
  - 14.4.5. At the request of adjacent property owners for vehicle access, subject to the presentation of approved building plans, where no other alternative can be found. The applicant will be held liable for the cost of removal as well as for the aesthetic loss to the environment. The cost will be based on the Tree Evaluation System for valuing a tree as set out in paragraph 14.2 and Table 1;
  - 14.4.6. Trees that were damaged during vehicle accidents.

## **15. INSURANCE CLAIM**

All insurance claims will be dealt with by the Insurance Department. The Urban Forestry Section will conduct the inspection and provide the Insurance Department with the incident report.

## **16. TREE APPLICATION FORM FOR FELLING OF TREES (ANNEXURE 2)**

An Application Form must be completed and submitted to initiate an investigation. Any approved tree felling requests must be accompanied with photographs to proof that the tree requires felling. Records will be kept of all applications received for pruning and felling.

## **17. REMOVAL OF FALLEN TREES**

17.1. The following procedures will be followed in the event of the removal of fallen tree:

- 17.1.1. In the event of a tree falling within the WC024 jurisdiction, the municipality or emergency teams/ service provider will ensure the removal of such a tree(s).

- 17.1.2. In an emergency where a street tree has fallen onto private property, the Urban Forestry team or emergency teams/ service provider will remove the tree in order to ensure the safety of persons and property.

## **18. TREE MAINTENANCE AND PROTECTION**

18.1. The following principles apply:

- 18.1.1. All newly planted trees shall have a maintenance plan with a particular focus on the first three years of the trees' life-cycle, so as to ensure the survival of the newly planted trees.
- 18.1.2. A watering and fertilisation programme may be applied.
- 18.1.3. Dead, dangerous and diseased trees must be reported to the municipality immediately for investigation to determine the state of the tree.

## **19. COMPLIANCE AND ADHERENCE**

The Tree Management Policy and objectives outlined reflect the policy of Stellenbosch Municipality. Anyone failing to adhere to the Tree Management Policy and its specifications or causing damage to trees will be prosecuted. Applications by property owners / the public / non Council organisations to plant trees on Council property must be done in writing and addressed to the Municipality.

## Annexure 1

### RECOMMENDED STREET TREES FOR STELLENBOSCH MUNICIPALITY

<b>SCIENTIFIC TREE NAME</b>	<b>COMMON NAME</b>
<i>Quercus nigra</i>	'Water Oak'
<i>Quercus palustris</i>	'Pin Oak'
<i>Celtis africana</i>	'White Stinkwood'
<i>Rhus pendulina</i>	'White Karee'
<i>Nuxia floribunda</i>	'Forest Elder'
<i>Olea europaea</i>	'Wild Olive'
<i>Rhus pendulina</i>	'Yellow Wood'
<i>Harpephyllum caffrum</i>	'Wild Plum'
<i>Combretum erythrophyllum</i>	'River Bushwillow'
<i>Sideroxylon inerme</i>	'White Milkwood'
<i>Podocarpus henkelii</i>	'Yellow Wood'
<i>Ekebergia capensis</i>	'Cape Ash'
<i>Illex mitis</i>	'Cape Holy'

## Annexure 2

### APPLICATION FORM FOR THE FELLING OF TREES

This form needs to be completed and relevant additional information attached before an application will be evaluated and considered.

<b>Reference Number</b>					
<b>Date of Application</b>					
<b>Name and Surname</b>					
<b>Physical Address of Tree.</b>					
<b>Email Address of Applicant</b>					
<b>Telephone Number</b>					
<b>Tree Location</b>	Park		Pavement		
	POS		River		
<b>Reason for Removal of Tree (s)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Please tick</b>	<b>Comment</b>		
	Dead				
	Dangerous				
	Diseased				
	<b>Other- please motivate:</b>				
<b>Tree Species</b>					
<b>Details of Tree Replacement Plan</b>					
<b>Was commitment form signed?</b>	Yes/ No				
<b>Pictures attached</b>	Yes/ No				

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

<b>Date of site visit</b>			
<b>Name of municipal representatives who undertook inspection.</b>	Name:		
	Designation:		
	Name:		
	Designation:		



<b>Description of Request by Official</b>		
<b>Sufficient evidence</b>	Yes	No
	Emails	
	Pictures	
	Other Supporting Documents	
<b>Recommendation by Sup Urban Forestry</b>	Approved	
	Rejected	
	Motivation for decision:	
	Conditions of Approval:	
<b>Supported by Manager: Environmental Management</b>	Approved/ Rejected	
<b>Manager: Community Services</b>	Approved/ Rejected	

### **Annexure 3**

Stellenbosch Municipality  
Jan Marais 123 Merriman Street, Stellenbosch, 7600  
Email: [Maindren.Chettiar@stellenbosch.gov.za](mailto:Maindren.Chettiar@stellenbosch.gov.za)  
Phone: 021 808 8132/8160



### **TREE PLANTING COMMITMENT FORM**

<b>APPLICATION DETAILS</b>	
<b>Date of planting:</b>	
<b>Name and Surname:</b>	
<b>Address ( or erf number)</b>	
<b>Contact Details:</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Tree Species:</b>	
<b>Number of Trees planted:</b>	
<b>Tree number:</b>	
<b>Type of Event ( if applicable)</b>	

